Department for Education

School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool Checklist

Reference AF496133593

Organisation details

Company number:	**07645701**
Trust name:	**Michaela Community Schools Trust**

Summary of Questions and Answers

Governance		
Question 1	Have the Chief Financial Officer, Accounting Officer and chair of trustees read the Academy Trust Handbook, noting changes from last year? Circulated to all governors on 31.10.22 with a summary of the changes.	Yes
Question 1a	Do they understand their role in complying with the trust's charitable objects, with company and charity law, and with the funding agreement?	Yes

Question 2	Has the board assessed its composition during the year in terms of skills, effectiveness, leadership and impact? A skills audit was completed in Spring 21 which showed good coverage of skills and experience on the Governing Body. There have been no changes to the membership since then. Results in external exams and outcome of annual audit provide external validation that the Governing Body continues to be effective.	Yes
Question 3	Does the board have a plan in place to address any gaps in its capabilities through recruitment, induction, training or other development activity? No gaps in capabilities have been identified, training needs kept under review.	Yes
Question 4	Has the board appointed the senior executive leader as accounting officer? HT Katharine Birbalsingh	Yes
Question 4a	Has the board assured itself that the senior leader has appropriate skills to fulfil their role as accounting officer in accordance with the financial responsibilities of the duty to the public purse?	Yes
Question 5	Has the board appointed a qualified and/or experienced chief financial officer (CFO)? Finance Manager Ali Mansfield	Yes
Question 6	Has the board appointed a governance professional who is someone other than a trustee, principal or chief executive of the trust? Ali Mansfield, clerk with 8 year's experience.	Yes
Question 7	How many times has the board met in the last year? 20.10.21, 15.12.21, 07.02.22, 29.03.22, 24.05.22, 06.07.22	6
Question 8	Has the trust held an Annual General Meeting (AGM) with members in the last 12 months?	Yes

Question 8b	What percentage of members attended the AGM? 80%	
Question 9	Has the board approved a written scheme of financial delegation? Included within the Finance Policy	Yes
Question 10	Does the trust have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair? Where the finance committee and audit and risk committee are separate, the chair should not be the same.	In Part
Question 11	Does the trust have an audit and risk committee?	Yes, it's combined with another committee
Question 11a	Does the audit and risk committee reflect minimum good practice by precluding employees from its membership? Audit and Risk function carried out by FGB, staff members remain in the meeting but do not have a vote.	Yes
Question 11b	How many times has the audit and risk committee met in the last 12 months?	1
Question 12	Are trustees assured that risks are managed and a risk register is maintained? Risk Register is now a standing item at all FGB meetings	Yes
Question 13	Does the academy trust operate in accordance with all of the requirements in the Academy Trust Handbook to identify and avoid conflicts of interest, and to report and manage related party transactions? Governors complete declarations of business interests on an annual basis and declare any conflicts at each meeting.	Yes
Question 14	Has the trust published its governance arrangements on its website in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook?	Yes

Trust financial strategy		
Question 15	Has the board of trustees carried out a going concern assessment of the trust to inform the basis of the preparation for financial statements? Completed by Blick Rothenberg on behalf of governors	Yes
Question 15a	Can the board clearly evidence the information and data used to inform this assessment and the assumptions made? Information from annual accounts	Yes
Question 16	Can the trust evidence that its three-year financial forecast has been reviewed by the trustees before approval? Circulated with documents for FGB meeting on 06.07.22 where it was subsequently approved. Questions from MD, including pointing out an error which was subsequently corrected	Yes
Question 17	Can the trust evidence that trustees have taken financial performance in previous years into account (e.g., adjustments for areas of significant underspend or overspend)? Budgets over recent years have not shown significant variances.	Yes
Question 18	Are the assumptions behind the three-year forecast, including pupil number projections, documented and challenged by the board? Assumptions included on the three-year forecast document.	Yes
Question 19	If a cumulative deficit has been forecast within the three-year budget, is there a plan to mitigate it?	Not Applicable
Question 20	Is the financial strategy integrated with the trust's strategy for raising standards and attainment? We continue to invest in excellent teachers	Yes

Question 21	Does the trust survey its physical estate and ensure appropriate capital provision in budget setting? Provision within revenue budget for general repairs and maintenance, substantial reserves in place which can be drawn upon as required for larger projects.	Yes
Question 21a	Are trustees aware of their duties under health and safety legislation?	In Part
Question 21b	Does the trust have an estate vision, strategy and asset management plan?	In Part
Question 22	Does the trust have an appropriate business continuity plan, including adequate insurance cover?	In Part
Setting the Annual Budget		
Question 23	Does the trust set a well-informed and balanced budget which is approved, in advance, by the board?	Yes
Question 24	Does the budget setting process allow sufficient time for the trust board to scrutinise and challenge the information provided? Challenge is mostly around sustainability, rather than specific spending allocations.	Yes
Question 25	Do trustees challenge pupil number assumptions and can the trust move quickly to recast the budget if the projections and reality are materially different? School is always full with a waiting list in years 7 to 11, 6th form numbers are kept under close review but are difficult to predict. Reserves can be drawn upon if 6th form numbers are lower than anticipated.	Yes

Question 26	Is end year outturn in line with budget projections, or if not, is the trust board alerted to significant variations in a timely manner, and do they result from planned changes or from genuinely unforeseeable circumstances? Year end outturn for 21/22 better than expected because of increased self-generated income and additional funding from DfE. Reports to governors clearly show variances with explanations.	Yes
Question 27	Are balances at a reasonable level and does the trust have a clear plan for using the money it plans to hold in balance at the end of each year? Governors are comfortable with the current level of reserves which are used to underwrite the development of the new sixth form and allow for capital projects as required including IT.	Yes
Staffing		
Question 28	Does the trust review and challenge its staffing structure regularly to ensure it is the best structure to meet the needs of the trust whilst maintaining financial integrity? Staffing structure is delegated to the HT within certain budgetary constraints. Excellent academic results and a strong financial position year on year are evidence that this continues to be the best structure to meet the needs of the trust,	Yes
Question 29	Is the pay of senior leaders tightly correlated to strong educational outcomes and sound financial management? Excellent academic results, strong financial position year on year. Governors sought independent advice from Tom Legge when setting the salary of the Executive HT, robust discussion followed.	Yes
Question 30	Does the trust benchmark the size of the senior leadership team annually against that of similar schools? Benchmarking exercise with Finance Governors, this is one of the KPIs	Yes

Question 31	Has the academy trust published on its website the number of employees whose total benefits exceeded £100k?	Yes
Value for money		
Question 32	Does the trust benchmark its income and expenditure and that of its schools annually against that of similar trusts and schools and investigate further where any category appears to be out of line? Benchmarking information from 'My financial insights', no concerns raised	Yes
Question 33	Has the trust considered the results of the self-assessment dashboard or other DfE benchmarking tools? AM to share with Finance Governors again this year.	Yes
Question 34	Does the trust have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money? Purchasing Policy in place.	Yes
Question 35	Are the trustees given the opportunity to challenge their staffs' plans for replacing contracts for goods and services that are due to expire shortly? Annual review of contracts above an agreed threshold	Yes
Question 36	Does the trust consider collaboration with others, for example on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?	No
Question 37	Does the trust compare its non-staff expenditure against the DfE approved frameworks to ensure best value for money?	No
Protecting public money		
Question 38	Are the trustees sure that there are no outstanding matters from audit reports? There were no outstanding matters.	Yes

Question 39	Are the internal scrutiny arrangements, as defined in the Academy Trust Handbook, adhered to? Three ICE visits per year from Juniper	Yes
Question 40	Does the trust regularly review its internal control arrangements to safeguard against fraud, theft and cybercrime by staff, contractors, suppliers and other third parties? ICE visits from Juniper, advice from NatWest Bank	Yes
Question 41	Are all staff aware of the trust's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns? Whistleblowing Policy in place.	Yes
Question 42	Does the trust have an accounting system that is adequate and properly run and delivers accurate reports, including the required returns to ESFA? Sage Accounts 50, no concerns raised by auditors	Yes

Action plan

Governance

Question 10	**Does the trust have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair? Where the finance committee and audit and risk committee are separate, the chair should not be the same.**
Action planned	Finance Governors scrutinise the annual budget and the bi-monthly management accounts and attend meetings with the auditors, but decisions are taken by the whole Governing Body.
Target date	01/09/2023

Trust financial strategy

Question 21a	**Are trustees aware of their duties under health and safety legislation?**
Action planned	Consider appointing H&S Governor?
Target date	01/09/2023
Question 21b	**Does the trust have an estate vision, strategy and asset management plan?**
Action planned	Operations Manager manages the upkeep of the building. Remodelling of the building has now been completed. No formal asset management plan.
Target date	01/09/2023
Question 22	**Does the trust have an appropriate business continuity plan, including adequate insurance cover?**
Action planned	Business Continuity Plan underway, insurance cover provided by RPA
Target date	01/09/2023

Value for money

Question 36	**Does the trust consider collaboration with others, for example on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?**
Action planned	Not applicable
Target date	01/09/2023
Question 37	**Does the trust compare its non-staff expenditure against the DfE approved frameworks to ensure best value for money?**

Action planned	We do not currently use any of the DfE approved frameworks. Energy contracts are negotiated by Zenergi, value for money checked on a case by case basis by purchasing staff.
Target date	01/09/2023

Your details

Name:	Mrs Alison Mansfield
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Telephone number	07753865646

Accounting officer details

Name	K Birbalsingh
Role of accounting officer	executive principal

Declaration

The information submitted in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I confirm that the accounting officer has been sighted on the information being submitted and arrangements are being established of the trust to move towards compliance with the mandatory requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.

I confirm that the trust board has been sighted on the information being submitted and has approved this. (If not, please ensure that this is shared with the trustees at the next trust board)

Submission date:

14 March 2023